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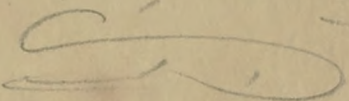
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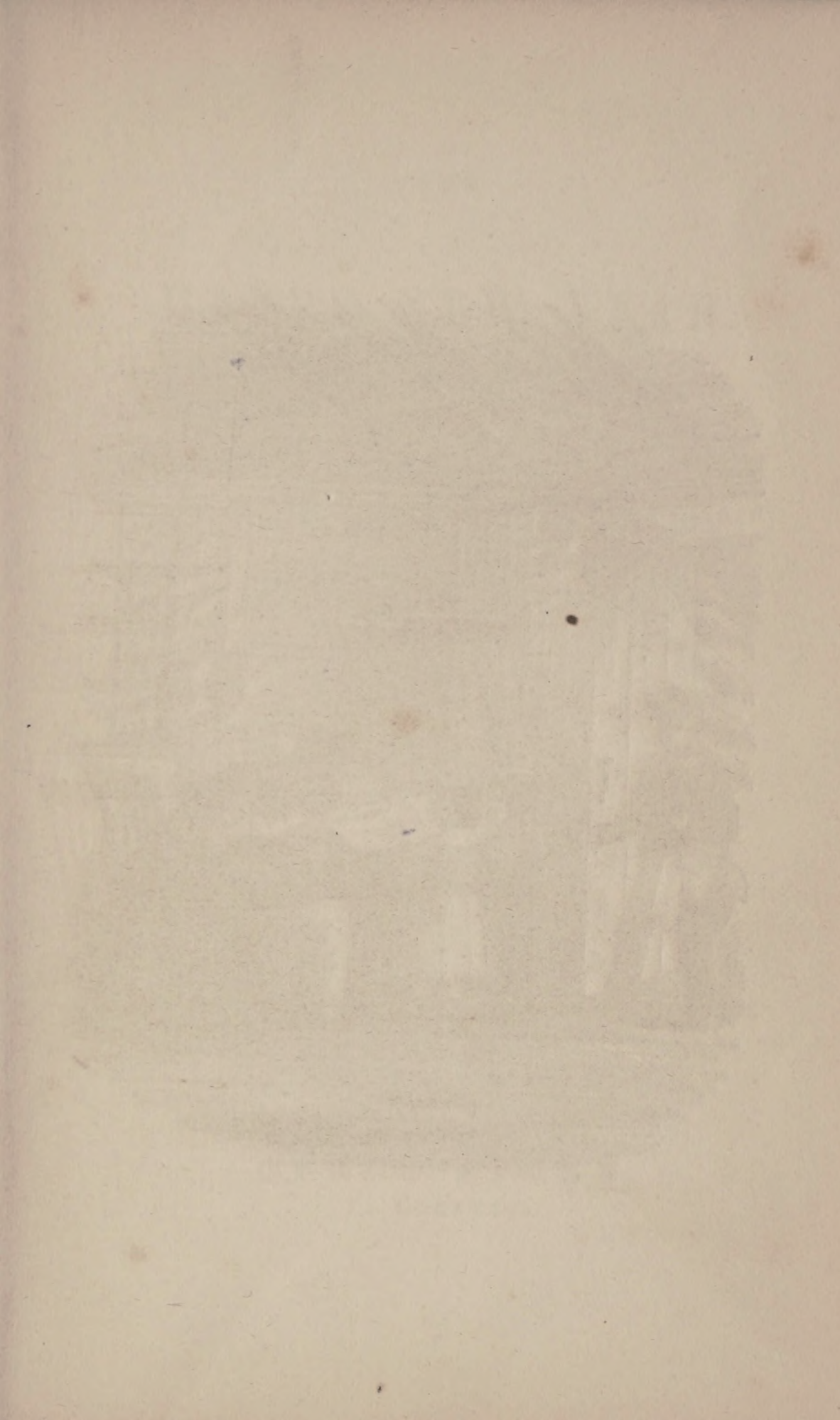
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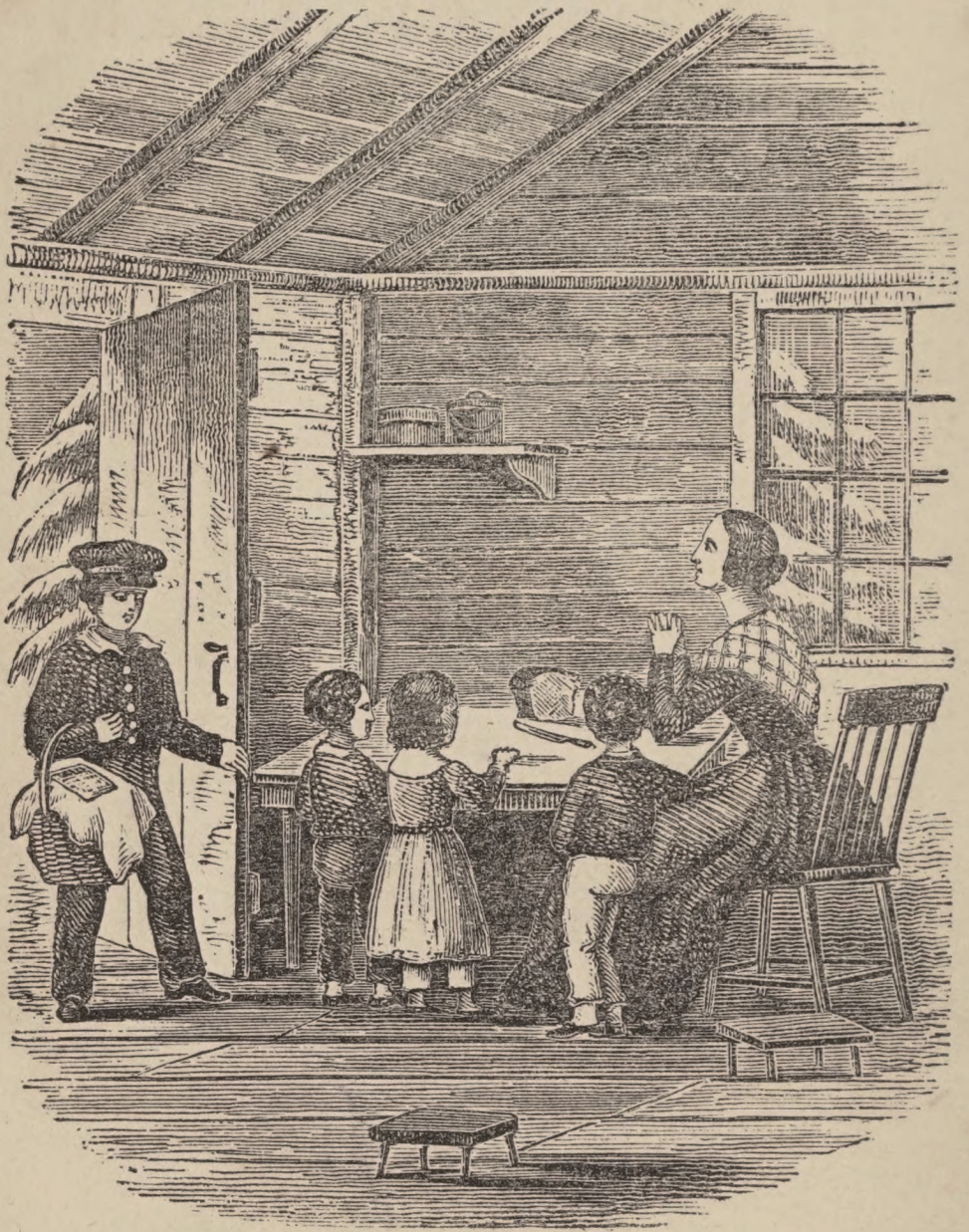












THE
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

A
NEW YEAR'S PRESENT
FOR
THE CHILD.

BY WILLIAM M. THAYER.

FOURTH EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.



BOSTON:
CYRUS STONE,
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PREFACE.

IN the preparation of this volume, the object of the writer was to expose the lack of meaning which is generally attached to the oft-repeated expression of friendship, "I WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR," and to illustrate to the minds of children the important truth that "A HAPPY NEW YEAR" does not depend upon wealth, fame, power, health, friends, or any other temporal possession or blessing, but upon true RELIGION.

The sale of the first edition, and the favor

with which the work has been received, encourage the author to hope that his humble effort at this kind of writing may not be wholly fruitless. The present edition appears with some corrections and additions.

W. M. T.

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THE HAPPY NEW YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

“I wish you a happy new year.”—What does it mean?—
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write this book.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR, for all the children who read this volume, is the wish of the author. For he loves to see a HAPPY CHILD, as rosy as an apple, and as smiling as an April morning. May it be a HAPPIER year, dear children, than any which you have seen; and I am sure it will be, if it is happy in the way I mean.

Did you ever think to inquire what is the meaning of the phrase, “A HAPPY NEW YEAR?” Have you not sometimes expressed this wish to your brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, friends and playmates, without any meaning at all?

On the last evening of last year, Jane Marlow

declared she would be up first in the morning, and wish all hands a happy new year. So away she went to bed, two hours earlier than usual, that she might awake long before the morning sun would look in at her window.

Now, Jane was about eleven, and her little sister, who slept with her, about eight years of age. The latter was very anxious to know how Jane would manage to get the start of her parents in the morning. So she made inquiries.

“Jane, I do not see how you will wake up before father does, for we never wake in the morning till he comes and calls us. Will you wake up easier new-year’s day?”

“I am going to do just as Kitty Ford did last new-year’s morning,” replied Jane. “She told me that she agreed with Margaret (the servant girl) to wake her as soon as she opened her eyes, and then she ran down stairs, and burst into her mother’s bed-room, and waked her and her father too, by wishing them a happy new year. Now I think that is a good way. So I have got Mary (the servant girl) to wake me very early, for she always gets up before father and mother, and then I shall wish them a happy new year before they think I am awake.”

Well satisfied with this, Jenny — for that was

the name of the little sister — asked no more questions, and soon was fast asleep. But Jane thought so much about surprising her parents very early, and became so restless thereby, that it seemed to her she should keep awake all night. I need not tell you more about her feelings, for all of you, who have been impatient for a holiday to come, know exactly how she felt.

Finally, Jane, too, fell asleep, and the night hours passed swiftly away. You know that time seems to pass more rapidly when you are asleep than when awake. So that night was very short to Jane.

The morning came, but only a few streaks of light could be seen in the east, it was yet so early. But Mary thought it was high time that Jane was up, if she would surprise her parents. So she arose, dressed herself, and was soon at Jane's bedside, whispering in her ear.

Jane was not as long as usual waking on that morning. She did not have to rub her eyes much. They came open easily, and she was soon dressed, and down stairs she went "as still as a mouse." In a moment more the whole house rang with her voice, *I wish you a happy new year!* I WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR! Her parents started up from a sound sleep as if the house were on fire,

and were much pleased when they found that it was their little daughter who had begun the new year so "bright and early."

All was merry from this hour till the breakfast was on the table; dolls were paraded, the little tea-set spread, and numerous playthings brought forward for a real child's holiday.

The bell rang for breakfast; and when the family—father, mother, children and all—were seated around the table, there happened what I wish most of all to tell you.

"Jane," said her father, "can you tell me what you mean by a happy new year? You wished us such a year before we were up. What kind of a year shall we enjoy if we have a happy one?"

Jane scarcely knew what to reply, for she had not thought of this before, but she finally confessed how thoughtless she was, by answering,

"I don't know, father."

"But did you not mean anything, my daughter, when you expressed that wish?"

"O, yes; but then I can't tell exactly what I meant, though I think I can tell you now something about a happy year."

"You say, then, that you did not think any-

thing about what you meant when you wished us a happy new year?"

"Yes, father, I think ——"

"Well, my dear, that is what I want to know; it is very important to mean something by what you say. I would not give much for a wish, from you or anybody, if nothing is meant by it. But you say that you can now tell me something about it. Let me hear."

Jane was now quite ashamed that her wish had really so little meaning; but, making the best of it, she proceeded to say,

"I think that, if you and mother are not sick, and Jenny and I are not sick, and you have a plenty of money, and many friends to love you, and some other things, it would be a happy year to you."

Mr. Marlow looked at his wife and smiled, then said, "Jane, this is a more important matter than you suppose. We will dismiss it this morning, but, when it comes evening, I will talk more about it. I think you have very wrong ideas of what will make a happy new year."

None of my little readers must think that Jane was a very thoughtless girl, for she was just like most little girls and boys who wish their parents and others a happy new year. Very few of them

mean anything by it. And even older persons, men and women, express the same wish without meaning anything at all. Young men and young ladies address each other in the same way; and if we should put the simple question to them, which Jane's father put to her, they would be as really unable to give an answer. This suggests the incident which induced me to write this book.

Last new-year's day, I was on my way to the post-office, when a rosy-cheeked little fellow came running up to me in a great hurry, and exclaimed, "I WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR." I wished him one in return, and passed on.

Let me say here, that he was a member of the Sabbath School, as you might know, since nearly all boys who address a minister with such a good wish love the Sabbath School.

I went home, and all the day I was putting the question to myself, does that boy mean anything by a happy new year? — and I asked myself, do men and women mean anything by this oft-repeated wish? Convinced that usually there is little hearty good-will in the kind expression, I resolved, that day, that if I lived, before another new-year's day, I would write a

book to teach children what is really a HAPPY YEAR.

This is the book, children. And again I "WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY NEW YEAR;" and, before you read to the end, I think you will understand what it means.

CHAPTER II.

New-year's evening. — The conversation. — Be careful what we wish another. — Henry Wilson. — Celebrating the flight of time. — Thomas Jones and his sister. — One year less to live — Importance of thinking.

THE evening soon came. It was such a new-year's evening as many children have delighted to see. The moon shone like a silver plate, and the stars looked down as brightly as angels' eyes. The ground was white with snow, and the merry sleigh-bells proclaimed that joyous hearts were abroad that night.

Mr. Marlow had been absent all the day at his store, but he had closed it at an early hour, in order to spend the evening with his wife and children. And then, too, he had promised Jane that he would talk with her about the meaning of a happy new year. Jane had not forgotten it during the whole day; and as soon as her father had finished his supper, and the table was spread, and the solar lamp lighted, she reminded him of his promise.

“Father, you know that you promised to tell me about the meaning of a happy new year.”

“Yes, my daughter, and I have closed my store on purpose to tell you about it. I think that new-year’s evening is a very proper time to converse about the wish you expressed so early this morning.”

“Did you really think, last night,” asked Jane, “that I should get up so early this morning?” evidently a little proud of the deed.

“I think it was rather early,” replied her father, humorously, “to rise, in order to express a wish without a meaning.”

Jane dropped her head at this remark, but was now more anxious than ever to learn what a happy new year could mean.

“I should think, father, that this wishing one another a happy new year was rather a solemn thing, by the way *you* speak about it.”

“Perhaps you will think it is before we get through. If God should give us some of the things which our friends wish, He would bestow, perhaps, what would make us very wretched indeed. It is well to consider exactly what we mean, before we wish another would be prosperous and happy; for the things which we desire a friend to have might prove his ruin.”

"I hope you don't think that I want you and mother to have anything that will hurt you. I did not wish you such a year. I wished you a happy new year, and I am sure that you could not be happy, if anything should injure you."

"No, Jane, I know you did not mean that we might have anything to our injury; but I want you should understand that what we wish another might enjoy as a blessing, sometimes unexpectedly proves a curse. So that we ought not only to guard against uttering a wish without a meaning, but also be very careful about what we would have another person possess."

"I never thought of this before," said Jane. "I have very often wished that Mary Brown and Hattie Jones might have as nice dresses as mine, and many other things; and I thought I was kind in wishing so."

"You were kind, my child, and I wish all other children were as kind; but you don't quite understand me. You remember Henry Wilson, whom I dismissed from the store last summer, because he was so wild and reckless, do you not?"

"Yes, father."

"Much of the money he obtained was spent in riding about, and in dissipation. To wish that such a young man might have plenty of money,

and abundant time for pleasure, would be very wrong indeed. If such a wish were realized, it would prove his ruin. This was what I meant, Jane. And I thus spoke, in order that you might see the importance of thinking before you express a wish."

"I see now what you meant, father, and I think I shall always remember it."

"Before I pursue this subject further," said her father, seeming to regard the matter as a solemn one, "I desire to impress a very important truth upon your mind. It is in relation to the plays and sports, and the frolics with which children and young men and women celebrate new-year's day."

"I hope you don't think it is wrong to have a good time on this day?" said Jane, starting up with surprise. "New-year's day is n't Sunday. Mrs. Jones told mother to-day, that Thomas and his sister were going to have a party to-night, because it is new-year's evening; and I am sure Mrs. Jones is a good woman."

"Why, my daughter, are Thomas and his sister going to have a good time to-night?"

"Because another year has gone, and a new year begun, I suppose."

"And that is the very thought I would have

you dwell upon, Jane. I dare say, if we were to pass Mrs. Jones' house at twelve o'clock to-night, we should hear the sound of music and dancing, and perhaps the loud shouts of mirth; and all, you say, because another year has passed. Are they so glad that time is passing away, and that they are one year older?"

"I suppose so," replied Jane. "I am always very happy when new-year's day comes, and also on my birth day, when I think I am one year older."

"But are you not nearer the grave and eternity, by one year, every time you are one year older? Will you not die sooner,—will not the judgment come sooner? Have you not one year less to live?"

Jane was quite overcome by this unexpected exhibition of a solemn truth, and was obliged to make the confession, — "I never thought of this before."

"Then you think it is not a matter to sport about, that you have one year less to live every time a new year comes in, and that you will sooner be laid in the cold grave?"

"I think it is not," answered Jane. "But do many persons think of this?"

"I presume not; and this shows still more the

importance of thinking before we speak and act. You see by this how little reflection there is among men. You see, too, for what our minds were given to us. Of all the young men and women at Mrs. Jones' house to-night, probably there is not one who would not be greatly alarmed if he or she were to die to-morrow. And yet they are making merry over the flight of time, when every passing year is shortening their lives."

"Then you do not think it is right for young people to have merry times on new-year's day?"

"I have not said so. I only said that they ought not to be merry *because another year has passed away*; for this, rightly viewed, is a serious matter to them. They may have a merry time if they do it from the *right motive*."

"And what is that motive?" inquired Jane.

"Gratitude that their lives have been spared another year; that they are surrounded with so many blessings, and that they begin a new year in such pleasant circumstances, and with such flattering prospects before them. We are always to regard the *motive* in determining the right or wrong of actions."

"I think I shall never forget this truth on another new-year's day, father," added Jane, with a countenance indicating that she had

learned much of which she had never thought before.

Here a rap at the door interrupted the conversation. Mr. and Mrs. Joyful were ushered into the room, with "A HAPPY NEW YEAR" for Mr. and Mrs. Marlow, children and all.

CHAPTER III.

Conversation renewed.—Will wealth confer happiness?—Henry and Frances.—The poor widow.—The mind is the source of happiness.—The story of the poor, happy woman.

MR. and Mrs. Joyful called chiefly to offer the family a new-year's salutation, so they soon left. The evening was now so far spent, that Jane began to think she should hear little more about the meaning of A HAPPY NEW YEAR, on that night. But her father was full as anxious to give, as she was to receive, instruction upon the subject. So he began somewhat as follows:—

“Now, Jane, I am ready to talk with you about your wish. Did I not understand you to say that a plenty of money might make a happy year?”

“That was one of the things I mentioned. I do not mean that money alone would do it.”

“But you think that wealth will confer some happiness?”

“Yes, father; and it always seemed to me that rich people, who can have everything they want,

have not so much to trouble them. I think that Harry and Frances May are happier than poor Widow Barstow's children, and you know that Harry and Frances have everything they want."

"Well, could not Harry and Frances be made unhappy, notwithstanding their father is so rich?"

"I suppose they *could* be made unhappy. If their father and mother should die, or if they should be very sick, I think they would not be happy."

"Then, do you not see that happiness does not depend upon wealth? If money can give happiness, then why should it not make people happy when they are sick? No, Jane, true happiness does not depend upon any of the things which you have named."

"Do you mean to say, father, that a person who has no money, and none of the things I spoke of, may be just as happy as a person who has them all?"

"Yes, and happier too, than one who has them all, and does not use them as God designs he should. I have seen a widow with five children to support by washing for people, and yet she was happier than old Mr. Cross is, with his 'hundred thousand dollars.'"

"She may seem to be happy," said Jane, "but

I guess if you could see her all the time, you would find that she had many hearty cries. I know my mother could not be happy if she had to support us by washing; and it would make me unhappy to see her work so hard."

"Perhaps you think that rich people are happy because they are not compelled to labor. But do you not remember the commandment, 'Six days shalt thou labor?' God designed that men should work and not be idle, else he would have said, 'Six days shalt thou be idle.' He has so made us that we are much better if we work. The body is more healthy, the mind is more active, and the spirits are more lively. And, then, who thinks well of a lazy, lounging, indolent man?"

"Father, I thought I was going to learn about a happy new year; it is now after eight o'clock, and I have scarcely heard a word about it."

"Certainly you have. All that I have remarked is about what you have said concerning a happy year. I wish you to learn, in the beginning, that no person can be truly happy unless the *mind* is happy. He may possess the whole world, and yet he will be wretched, at least sometimes, unless his mind is peaceful. This shows that a happy new year does not depend upon any of the possessions which you mentioned."

"I should like to see such a person," said Jane, rather distrustingly. "He would make a good missionary, to be happy with nothing."

"I will prove to you that what I say is true, by telling you a very interesting story about a poor woman who was happier than any other person in the town where she lived."

"Do tell it, father; nothing pleases me more than your good stories. I hope it is a long one."

"It is long enough to prove that the poorest person on earth may be very happy. It is about a woman who lived in England. Her husband died very suddenly, and left her with three little children, without a cent in the world."

"Poor woman!" exclaimed Jane; "I should think her husband might have earned enough to have left her better off than that, if he was not lazy."

"Perhaps he thought as you do," replied her father, jocosely, "that they are happiest who do not work."

Jane knew not what to reply; so she remained silent.

"I was saying that the poor woman of whom the story tells was left with three children to support by her own toil. The eldest was only eight

years of age. It was, indeed, a hard lot. It is a great affliction to be left a widow, even with a plenty of money, and more to be left a widow without any. But, then, this poor woman was very happy; and, on the evening after her husband was buried, one of the neighbors heard her singing and praising God as cheerfully as ever.

“Was her husband a good man?” inquired Jane, evidently much interested.

“Yes, he died very happy, which shows that it may be a happy new year to a person even though he dies; about which I shall speak at some other time.”

“Did she have a house of her own?” inquired Jane.

“She lived in a sort of cabin which her husband made of slabs. It was a miserable dwelling, of course, and contained only one room. In a severe storm the rain would beat in so as to wet them. Beside, it was situated in a very lonely place, mostly surrounded by woods.”

“How do you know that she was happy there?” asked Jane, as if she thought her father’s narrative was guess-work.

“Because,” answered Mr. Marlow, “her minister took great interest in her, and wrote about her after she died. And what I was going to tell

you, of special interest, is what I have learned from him. He was in the habit of sending his son, a lad about twelve years of age, quite often with a basket of provisions to this poor widow's cabin. There had been a long, driving storm, so that people were not able to go out much. It lasted a week, and the minister began to think that the needy woman would starve before it was over."

"Did she have nothing to eat all this time?" inquired Jane, with much surprise. "O, the poor little children!"

"Yes, she doubtless had something to eat; but, depending much on the kindness of her neighbors for daily food, she would not be likely to have much before-hand. As I was saying, the minister watched the clouds, to note the first signs of fair weather; and, as soon as the storm was over, and the bright sun shone out in his splendor, he filled a basket with various kinds of food, and, having laid upon the top that beautiful tract called 'ALL FOR THE BEST,' started off his son upon his errand of mercy. I shall not stop to tell you how the lad reached the cabin, nor the conversation which took place there, but only what occurred when he returned."

"I should like to know," said Jane, "how he

found the poor woman and her children. That will be all the best of it.”

“You will learn that from what I shall say. He was gone from home nearly two hours. When he returned, he ran into his father’s study, in great haste, as if he had something very important to communicate, and exclaimed,

“‘Father, you will be astonished at what I have seen, when I tell you!’

“‘And what have you seen, my son?’

“‘Why, before I got to Widow D——’s, I heard her singing like a lark.’

“‘Perhaps she was happy at seeing the sun once more,’ said his father.

“‘I don’t know what she was happy for, but I never knew any one who seemed happier. She kept on singing till I got right up to the door, which was wide open, and she was so engaged that she did not notice me. And what do you think I saw?’

“‘Perhaps she saw you coming at a distance, and was praising and thanking God for aid,’ replied his father.

“‘Not that, not that,’ said Erasmus,—for that was the son’s name. ‘I saw her sitting at the table with her children, and there was nothing on it but a little piece of bread, not more than a quar-

ter as large as the loaf I carried, and yet she clasped her hands together, and looked up toward heaven, and I heard her say, "What, all this and Jesus Christ, too! — what, all this and Jesus Christ, too!"

"'Happy, happy woman!' said the delighted minister; 'fit to be the sister of Paul, who said, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content!'"

"'A happy woman, indeed!' cried Erasmus, with much enthusiasm; 'and I never saw a happier one. When I asked her if she had not been lonesome during the long storm, she smiled, and said, "No, indeed! I was never happier. The Saviour has been my company all the time. No, my little man, happiness is not made of money, and handsome clothes, and a table full of dainties."'"

Here Jane looked at her mother, and smiled. Her eyes revealed what she was thinking about. For you know that we can sometimes tell what a person is thinking about by looking at his eyes.

"Erasmus continued, saying, 'I should n't have thought it, but I think she is as happy as *you* are.'

"'I dare say she is much happier,' rejoined his father, 'because she is much better. The best

people are happiest, not the richest and most honored.' ”

Jane here interrupted, by saying, “I guess the children were a little happier, if their mother was not, when Erasmus showed his nice great basket full of food.”

“I was going to say, Erasmus told his father that when he produced his basket of food ‘the poor woman did not appear any happier than before, because she seemed as happy as she could be all the time.’ She was, indeed, very grateful, and showed her gratitude by saying, ‘*The Lord provides for us.*’ ”

Mr. Marlow closed the story just as the clock struck nine, saying, that “ever after this, the woman was no longer known as Widow D——, but was called ‘THE HAPPY WOMAN,’ because she was the happiest person in town.”

“There, Jane,” said Mrs. Marlow, who had not spoken before, “what do you think now? Is money so necessary to make a person happy? Did you ever hear of a rich man being so happy as to be called The Happy Man?”

“No,” replied Jane, quite satisfied with the story; “I think now that a person may be happy without being rich.”

“And do you not see that it is the *mind* which

made her happy ?” inquired her father. “If she had no money, honor and kindred things to make her happy, then she must have derived her enjoyment from something else. And since her body did not, and could not yield it, then it must have been her contented mind. And what is so likely to make one happy as a peaceful mind ?”

“I understand you now, father,” said Jane. “I see that if it is the things which a person owns which give happiness, and not the mind, Widow D—— would have been very wretched. Since she had nothing else to make her happy, it must have been her mind.”

It was now long after the children’s usual bed time. Mr. Marlow promised to renew the subject the next evening, which would be the Sabbath. He bowed in prayer, and asked God to watch over them through the year just commenced. He now kissed Jane and Jenny, as their mother took them by the hand to lead them to their chamber, and said, “I WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR.” Jane wished him the same in return, but smiled, and looked queerly, as if she did not know exactly what a happy new year meant.

CHAPTER IV.

The Sabbath.—The sermon, "This year thou shalt die."—Impression upon Jane.—Conversation renewed after meeting.—Can honor and power confer happiness?—Alexander unhappy.—The mayor.

THE Sabbath morning came, and promised a beautiful day. The trees, sprinkled over with snow and ice, appeared, in the light of the blazing sun, as if they were loaded with diamonds and precious stones. The family were up with the sun, all hurrying to be ready at the ringing of the bell for meeting. Nor did the last summons find them unprepared. The house of worship was crowded with people, especially in the afternoon, anxious to hear the new-year's sermon. Even little Jane could hardly wait for "sermon-time," as she called it, because she had heard so much about the new-year's wish on the previous evening. She was never so much interested before to hear a sermon. And when the preacher rose in the desk to announce his text, she turned her eyes toward her father, with a look which would have revealed

her thoughts to all, had they known the subject of conversation on Saturday night.

The minister gave his text, Jeremiah 28 : 16, "*This year thou shalt die.*" Solemn theme ! a text which is calculated to make every child, and every parent, too, exclaim, "What if *I* should die this year ?"

He went on to speak of the flight of time, how swiftly the years are passing away, making life shorter and shorter.

Jane looked at her father as if she thought of what he had told her about Thomas Jones and his sister making themselves merry when they had one year less to live.

He spoke of the joyous feelings which the young and old cherish at the opening of the year, and how these joys might be destroyed before its close. He spoke of some who commenced the last year in health, and promised to live long, but who were now in the grave. He said they were of all ages and conditions, the young and the old, the rich and the poor. He told how many died the preceding year. He dwelt upon the necessity of being prepared to die, and said that a good hope in Christ was worth more than a thousand worlds. He showed that wealth and honor were of little value to a person in sickness and death, and that,

in the most favorable circumstances, they could not yield any real happiness.

Here Jane looked at her father again, with an expression which was full of meaning; for she thought that the minister agreed with him exactly in all that he had said about money.

He gave many facts to show that the most wealthy and honored persons had been very unhappy in seasons of adversity, and especially in view of death. And, in closing, he spoke of the custom among men, women and children, of wishing each other a happy new year. He expressed the same wish to all before him, and especially to the youth, and said that, if they would give their hearts to God, whether sick or well, living or dying, it would certainly be the happiest year of their lives.

Jane scarcely turned her eyes from the minister during all the time he was preaching, except when she looked at her father. And her father was much interested, because the views of the minister coincided so perfectly with his own as expressed to his daughter. He thought it would impress the lessons which he had already imparted, more indelibly upon her mind, and prepare her to receive those which he designed to give at the close of the day.

Jane did not speak a word during all the way home. She was thinking of the sermon and a happy new year. Her father, too, was very thoughtful.

No sooner were they seated around the comfortable fire at home, than Mr. Marlow inquired, "Well, Jane, did not our pastor preach just what I told you last night?"

"Yes, father, I think he did. I thought you would like the sermon, because he agreed with you."

"And did he not say more than I did last evening? He proved one thing which I was going to talk with you about to-night, — that honor cannot make men happy. I think you said, that to be *honored* and placed in some high office might make a happy new year, did you not?"

"I do not recollect whether I did or not; but I always thought that a governor, or general, or president, must be very happy. I remember what you told me about General Lafayette; how the people respected him, and what a display they made with soldiers and music when he visited this country. And, last year, when President Fillmore visited some cities, I heard you say that they closed the stores, and all the great men went out to meet him, and the women and children flung

bunches of flowers into his carriage from the windows."

"And this is what makes you think that men who fill high offices, and exercise great power over their fellow-men, are *happy*, is it?" inquired Mr. Marlow.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you not remember what our pastor said to-day about the great general, Alexander?"

"I remember something, but he did not tell enough about him for me to understand."

"Alexander lived many years ago, and was one of the greatest generals ever known. He conquered many countries; and when he had conquered all the kingdoms far and near, he, of course, had a larger empire to rule over than any president or king ever had. Of course he was very rich, too. Do you remember now what our pastor said were his feelings as he looked upon all his possessions, and thought of his power? Was he happy?"

"No, father; he said that he sat down and wept."

"What should he weep for, if he was happy?"

"He was not happy," said Jane, "or he would not have wept."

"Did he not have enough honor and riches to

make him happy, if these are able to make any one happy?" inquired her father.

"I should think he had, if he had more than any one else ever possessed."

"Does it not seem, then, as if these possessions could not confer true happiness?"

"I think it does. If they could, I think Alexander would have been very happy."

"Can you tell me why he was not happy?"

"I suppose, according to what you say, it was because his mind was not happy."

"Do you think the many cares and troubles which a ruler must have in managing a state, or nation, are suited to make his mind peaceful? Will they not disturb the mind, rather than make it happy?"

"I should think they would."

"Can a person depend upon honor or power, then, to increase his enjoyment? I mean such enjoyment as will not be parted with in a day."

"No, I think they cannot. For I see that as soon as the honor is taken away, or the power, then all the happiness which they give must be taken away, too."

"Then there are two reasons which you have given," said her father, "why neither wealth, honor nor power, can make men really happy."

One is, the happiness which men expect to derive from them can last no longer than they do ; and as the wealth, honor, or power, may be removed any moment, so may the supposed happiness which they give be taken away at any moment. Now, the thought that one's happiness is so uncertain must make him unhappy."

"I see that," interrupted Jane ; "what is the other reason ?"

"The other is, that all such possessions are not suited to make the mind peaceful, but rather to disturb it. That is, as our minister said to-day, 'in their nature they are unsuited to make one happy.' And this last is the best reason of the two."

"Father, do you know of any other *great* person who was unhappy like Alexander ?"

"Yes, a great many. It was only two or three years ago that the mayor of one of our large cities declared, when he vacated his office, that he rejoiced to leave it, as he had not been happy for a moment in it, and yet he was a very popular mayor, and might have been reëlected."

Here the bell rang for supper, and the conversation ceased.

CHAPTER V.

The pleasure-life. — Will pleasure confer happiness? — Mr. Marston's and Mr. Gladstone's children. — The playthings. — The ride. — Mr. Gladstone's misfortune. — His children happy. — Lord Chesterfield. — Solomon.

“JANE,” said Mr. Marlow, after supper was finished, “I believe you told me, the other day, that you read a story in your little paper about the pleasure-life. Now, many children think that those people who have money enough to buy for themselves all the pleasures and amusements they want, are very happy. Perhaps you think that a good share of pleasures would make this a happy new year to you.”

“Yes, father, I have thought before to-day that it was so.”

“And what has changed your mind to-day?”

“The sermon which our minister preached. You know he told about a man who had all the pleasures he wanted, and yet he was very unhappy when he was sick and dying.”

“Yes, it was Chesterfield,” said her father.

"I used to think," continued Jane, "that Mr. Marston's children must be much happier than we are, because they have so many pleasures. Their father is so rich, that they can ride and journey when they wish, and go to all the concerts and amusements they please, and have all the dresses and playthings they want. And I do think *now* that it would be real pleasure to ride in their fine carriage."

"But do you think that Mr. Marston's children are any happier than Mr. Gladstone's? You know that Mr. Gladstone was once very rich when he lived in the city, but he became poor by his great losses, and had to remove into the country, and now labors with all his family to secure a living."

"Yes, sir, I do think that Mr. Gladstone's children cannot be as happy as Mr. Marston's. I should think it would make them unhappy to think how well off they were once, and now they are poor, and can have scarcely one of the pleasures which they used to possess."

Here Jane's mother, who had not spoken a word since supper, interrupted, by saying to her, "I think I can tell you some things about them, Jane, which may alter your mind. You know that your father and I have visited much in both of these

families, and we have been so intimate with each other that we have seen the children very often. I can tell you what I saw and heard at Mr. Mars-ton's the very last afternoon I spent there."

"Was it anything about Helen or George?" asked Jane, with much apparent interest.

"That is what I am going to tell you. I had not been there a half-hour before George came whining to his mother, and said, 'What shall I play, mother? Tell me something to play.'

"'Play with your rocking-horse, my son,' replied his mother. 'And there is your little wagon in the nursery, go and draw that.'

"'I don't want either of them,' said George, angrily. 'I want to play something else.'

"'There is your new wheel-barrow in the yard. Your marbles, too, are in the dining-room. And you have not used your swing but a little since your father put it up.'

"'I have played with these enough, mother; I want something new. I wish father would buy me something when he goes to the city.'

"'Go away, my son; be a good boy. Go and ride your rocking-horse, and you shall ride with the greys to-morrow, if father goes.'

"'I don't want to ride with the greys. I am tired of riding so much. If father would buy me

a pony, I should like to ride that. I should think I might have one. I don't have anything.'

"I thought by this time, Jane," said Mrs. Marlow, "of the many children who have no rocking-horse, and no coach to ride in. And it seemed to me that the more amusements George Marston had, the less happy he was. Do you think, now, that his many pleasures made him happier than Willie Gladstone is?"

"No, mother; and it seems strange to me that he could n't be happy with so many things. What did his mother say when he said he did n't have anything?"

"She looked tried, and turned to me and said, 'George is a very discontented child.' My own opinion is, that he was more discontented because he had so many pleasures."

"Was Josephine so unhappy, mother?" asked Jane. "Did you see her?"

"You may judge of that yourself," replied her mother. "Josephine came home from school at recess, in order to ride with her parents out of town. My unexpected visit prevented their going, though I should not have stopped if Mrs. Marston had informed me of her plans. As soon as she came into the house, she exclaimed,

“ ‘Have I kept you waiting, mother? I came home as fast as I could.’

“ ‘My dear, we shall not be able to go this afternoon; and I am sure you will not be disappointed, for here is Mrs. Marlow come to see us.’

“ ‘I never saw Josephine look so unhappy before,’ said Mrs. Marlow. “ ‘She turned her eyes at me as if she thought I was the cause of her disappointment; then, bursting into tears, she cried aloud,

“ ‘It is always so, mother. I never can go when I want to. It has been so ever so many times. I don’t ride any.’

“ ‘Hush! hush, my child!’ interrupted her mother, quite mortified that I should hear and see so much. ‘Mrs. Marlow will not have a very good report to carry to Jane. I never saw her behave so.’ ”

Jane turned to her father with a look which told that she was quite pleased with the compliment, and her mother went on with her story.

“ ‘Josephine wiped her face, after she had cried long enough, but looked very unhappy. She had dolls of different sizes, two beautiful little tea-sets, chairs, tables, sofa, and every sort of knick-knack which a child could have; but she did not want to

touch them. And in a very short time she cried out,

“ ‘Mother, I ’ll warrant it will rain to-morrow afternoon, so that I can’t go to see Ellen Greenwood. You know it is Wednesday afternoon, when school will not keep. There is always something ——’

“ ‘Hush, my dear!’ interrupted her mother: ‘what makes you think it will rain to-morrow?’

“ ‘Because, when I was coming home, I heard Mr. James tell his hired man that he thought it would rain to-morrow. I think it is too bad. I could n’t go last Wednesday because it rained. I never go anywhere.’

“ ‘Perhaps it will not rain to-morrow. You had better wait and see, before you make yourself so unhappy.’

“ ‘Well, there is but one Wednesday afternoon in a week for me to visit, and I don’t see why God could n’t make it rain some other day as well as Wednesday.’

“ ‘It chilled my blood,’ said Mrs. Marlow, “to hear her thus find fault with God. And her mother felt it, too, although she is a worldly woman. She, however, made the best of it, and persuaded Josephine to leave the room, when she said to me,

“ ‘I do not understand why my children are so discontented. They are not easy a moment unless they are going somewhere, or having something new. And yet we try to make them happy by gratifying their wishes, and obtaining for them everything to amuse them.’

“I know,” said Mrs. Marlow to Jane, “why they were so unhappy.”

“Why, mother?” asked Jane, earnestly; “did you tell her?”

“No, of course not. But I knew it was because they furnished them with so many pleasures. It cultivated their love for them, so that the more they had the more they wanted, and the less satisfied were they. Now, do you think yourself, Jane, that Mr. Marston’s children may be called happy?”

“I do not; but I should never have thought it. If pleasures will make anybody happy, I should think *they* had enough of them to do it. But how do you know that Mr. Gladstone’s children are not as unhappy as Josephine and George?”

“I will tell you,” replied Mrs. Marlow, “what Mr. Gladstone himself told us. He was doing business in the city on a very extensive scale, and was worth many thousands of dollars. He lived in a beautiful house, elegantly furnished, although

he lived less extravagantly than Mr. Marston does now. He and his wife were pious, and thought it wrong to spend all their money upon themselves, and have little or none to give to the poor and perishing. He was very kind and benevolent, and taught his children that wealth is not a blessing unless it is used in doing good. He early made them feel that he would rather they would be good than rich, and taught them not to depend upon earthly possessions for happiness. Elizabeth and Frederick, the two eldest, became pious when quite young, and united with the church."

"And what made him poor?" inquired Jane, impatient to hear.

"I was about to say," replied her mother, "that an unexpected prostration of business throughout the country made his losses so great that he was obliged to relinquish everything to his creditors,—house, store, goods, furniture, horses, carriages,—all. It was a sore trial to him. When he was first fully aware of what the end must be, he thought of his wife and children, and could hardly make up his mind to tell them. He supposed it would make them very unhappy. He thought they would weep and repine over the sad misfortune."

"It seems hard," interrupted Jane, "that so good a man should lose all his money."

"For several days he could not bear to tell them. But his wife, and Elizabeth and Frederick, saw that he was troubled. He showed it in his countenance, and could not eat. At length, Mrs. Gladstone inquired into the cause of this change in his appearance. It was late in the evening, after the children had retired. He disclosed to her the whole of his affairs, and his intention of leaving the city for an humble country residence."

"Did it not almost break her heart?" asked Jane, with great concern.

"Far from it," replied her mother; "the very first words she uttered were, 'My dear husband, money is the last thing I would be distressed about. I have never depended much upon being rich; for we read that riches certainly make themselves wings; and our observation fully proves it. Besides, I have thought we needed such a discipline as this to humble our hearts, and cause us to learn that "all things work together for good to them that love God."'

"Mr. Gladstone was greatly relieved by these words," continued Mrs. Marlow; "and it was

agreed that the children should be informed upon the following day.

“The morning came, and with it the usual life and glee of the sons and daughters. Mr. Gladstone went to his store, and his wife took her own way to convey to the children the unexpected intelligence that their father was now a poor man.”

“I should like to have been there,” said Jane, “and have seen how it made them feel, poor children.”

“I am going to tell you. They all seemed greatly surprised, but Elizabeth said at once,

“‘I hope father will not let this trouble him, mother. I am sure that Frederick and I can support ourselves, and do something toward supporting you and him. You know I can do almost any kind of needle-work, and can give lessons on the piano; and I think I shall enjoy it better, because I shall feel that I am accomplishing something, and I never have felt so in the city.’

“Frederick added, ‘And for my part, I shall not be sorry at all to exchange the city for the country. I have always desired to live in the country and be a farmer. And you know, mother, that Dr. Hosmer told father last year, when he was so feeble, that it would benefit his health to live

on a farm. I am sure we should all be happier to make this exchange if it would improve father's health. You have often said that God has good designs in every event. Perhaps he does this in order to send us to the country that father may enjoy good health.'

"Mrs. Gladstone could not help smiling, and her heart was never happier. Even Augusta, only ten years of age, declared that she should soon be old enough to do much for her parents, and was not at a loss in thinking of ways. And as for little Willie, the youngest, eight years old, he said,

" 'Then I will learn to trundle a hoop in the streets, and drive a horse. I was never so happy as when I have been at Uncle James', in the country; for I can run out doors as much as I please, and roll on the green grass, and pick flowers, and do a thousand things which I can't do now.'

"All were so amused at Willie's speech, that they almost forgot their poverty," continued Mrs. Marlow.

"Did Mr. Gladstone tell you whether his children have been as happy here as they thought they should be?" asked Jane.

"Yes; he told us that they had never been

discontented at all. Although they have scarcely any of the means of worldly pleasure here which they had in the city, yet they have seemed to be happier. And they have even said, they would rather be poor and live in the country, with few amusements, than be rich and live in the city, as they did once."

"There, Jane," exclaimed Mr. Marlow, "what do you think now about a PLEASURE-LIFE, compared with a WORKING-LIFE? I think we may call Mr. Gladstone's life, now, a WORKING-LIFE."

"I think," replied Jane, "that such things prove a person may have a happy new year without such pleasures. It seems as if happiness does not depend upon things to amuse us."

"I am glad that you are thoroughly convinced of the fact," said her father. "And I wish to tell you something more about the famed Chesterfield, to whom our minister referred to-day. It will confirm what your mother has been saying."

"Did he not call him LORD Chesterfield?" asked Jane.

"Yes. After he had sought pleasure on every hand, and was drawing nigh to the grave, he wrote these words, which I copied several years ago upon a blank leaf of this Bible: 'I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their

futility, and I do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low ; whereas, those who have not experienced, always overrate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare ; but I have been behind the scene.' But a greater than Chesterfield, even Solomon, the wise man, has recorded a similar testimony in the Bible, in order to warn men to beware of the PLEASURE-LIFE. He enjoyed more means of pleasure than any man whose history is known, as you will learn from what he says : ' I made me great works ; I builded me houses ; I planted me vineyards ; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit ; I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees ; I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house ; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem before me ; I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces ; I got me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem ; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes

desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy.' ”

“And yet he was not happy, was he ?” inquired Jane, getting such ideas from the passage as she had not before.

“Hear what he says in view of it,” answered her mother : ‘And I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do ; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.’ ”

“VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT !” repeated Mr. Marlow ; “that does not sound like deriving happiness from the PLEASURE-LIFE, does it ?”

“I did not know before that there was so much in the Bible about it,” said Jane.

“To-morrow evening I shall have more to say,” added Mr. Marlow ; so they dismissed the subject and made preparations to retire.

CHAPTER VI.

Monday evening.— Can a person be happy in sickness?—
Five blessings derived from sickness.— The story of the
wonderful sight.

It was Monday evening. At an early hour Mr. Marlow introduced the subject of conversation which was dismissed on the previous evening.

“ You said, Jane, that in order to have a happy new year, it was necessary to enjoy health. You thought that we might have such a year if none of us were sick. Do you think that a person cannot be happy in sickness ? ”

“ Why, yes, father,” replied Jane, “ a sick person is the last one I should expect to find happy. If I knew that I should be very sick this year, it would make me unhappy to think of it.”

“ Think you could not be happy in sickness, if you thought God sent it for your good ? ”

“ Perhaps I might, if I only could feel it was good to be sick. I know that you have told me about such things being good for us, but I don’t see that it ever did me any good to be sick.”

“Are not people who are seldom sick generally ungrateful for the blessing of health? And do not sick people feel their dependence upon God more?”

“Yes, father, I think that is true.”

“Then there is one good it does people to be sick. Do you not think that sick people have more sympathy for others who are sick than well people have?”

“I should think they did. I remember, when mother was sick a few weeks ago, how pitifully she spoke of poor Fanny Leonard who has been sick so long.”

“There is another good that sickness does,” said Mr. Marlow. “Are not people generally more likely to think of God and eternity when sick than when in health?”

“Perhaps they are,” answered Jane. “People can’t be as cheerful when sick as when they are well; and so they would be more solemn, and think of serious things more.”

“Then there are three blessings which you admit sickness gives. Did you never hear of even wicked men becoming better when made sick?” inquired Mr. Marlow, with increased earnestness; for he supposed that Jane must remember such a case in their own neighborhood.

"Why, yes, father," replied Jane, with much interest; "don't you recollect how old Mr. Johnson used to swear and drink, and how he abused his family? And since he was so dreadful sick, last winter, they say he is very kind and sober; and I saw him at meeting last Sabbath."

"There is yet another good which sickness does. And did you never hear of persons being made Christians by sickness?"

"I don't recollect any one, though I may have heard of some one."

"You know that Deacon Valentine is very active in our prayer-meetings. A few years ago he was a wicked man; but when he was very sick, and thought he must die, he sent for our pastor to pray with him, and he became a Christian."

"I have always thought," said Jane, "that he is one of the best men in town."

"Now we have already discovered five good things which sickness does, and, if I had time, I might name more."

"I see now, father, how a person can be happy, even though he is sick; he must feel that God does it for his good."

"That is it, my daughter; then the mind will be undisturbed, and, of course, peaceful. You know I showed you yesterday that men can be happy

only when the mind is contented. Now I will tell you a very interesting story, which proves all I have said."

"I am glad of that," said Jane; "I can understand you much better when you talk by stories."

So her father began to tell her the story about Rev. Henry Venn and his children. Jane listened with new interest, and even Jenny opened her dozy eyes a little wider at the announcement that a story was forthcoming.

"Mr. Venn told his children one day," said Mr. Marlow, "that he would take them to see one of the most interesting sights in the world.

"What is it? — what is it?" inquired Albert and Eliza; "when will we go?"

"I know what it is," said Roseline, as she sat dressing her doll; "when I went to the store with mother, the other day, I saw a large show-bill, with all sorts of animals on it, and I heard a man say that they were coming to town this week. I guess it is that."

"Mr. Venn would not tell his children what it was they were going to see," continued Mr. Marlow; "but he assured them it was one of the most interesting sights to himself that he knew of.

The children were guessing all the day long, and hardly could wait for the morrow to come."

"I think I know exactly how they felt," said Jane, smiling. "I know how I felt the night before new-year's day."

Mr. Marlow smiled at Jane's remark, and continued the story. "The next morning, as soon as the children were up, Mr. Venn said to them, 'Now, my children, to-day I will show you the sight.' It put them all in a glee, and the 'sight! the sight!' was all the talk, until the horse and carriage stood at the door."

"Was it so far they had to ride, father?" inquired Jane.

"It was quite a distance," replied her father; "but they were soon on their way, and it was not long before they lost sight of the village. Through a long tract of woodland they rode, over a by-road which was very little travelled, and at length came out into an open field.

"'There,' said Mr. Venn, pointing to a most wretched habitation some fifty rods distant, 'we are going to that house.'

"The children looked at each other, and then at their father, with an air of wonder, and Roseline cried out,

"'Is that the sight, father?'

“ ‘We shall soon see,’ he replied. ‘Did you ever see such a miserable dwelling as that?’

“ ‘Does any one live there?’ asked Eliza.

“ ‘Yes, and we are going there,’ said her father.

“ ‘For what they were going there the children could not understand,’ continued Mr. Marlow.

“ ‘They were now more perplexed than ever to know what the wonderful sight could be. It certainly was not the collection of wild animals which Roseline supposed. And what very wonderful thing could be seen in such a wretched-looking house, they could not imagine. But they soon reached the house.

“ ‘Should you think, children,’ inquired Mr. Venn, ‘that a happy person could live here?’

“ ‘No,’ said Eliza; ‘it makes me homesick to look at it.’

“ ‘The poor-house is a palace to it,’ said Albert.

“ ‘Now,’ said Mr. Venn, as they alighted, ‘I will tell you what the sight is. In this miserable dwelling there is a young man lying upon the bed, sick with a fever, and having nine dreadful ulcers on his body.’”

“ ‘I don’t think there is much interesting about that,’ said Jane; “and you said that he told his children he would show them the most interesting sight they ever saw. You don’t think it is very

pleasant to see a man with nine ulcers on his body, do you ?”

“Hear, hear !” replied her father. “He led them into the house, and all the while little Rose-line clung to him as if she were going into a den of wild animals. The first door they opened disclosed the sight, for there was only one room in the house. There lay the young man, thin and pale, and fast wasting away. Mr. Venn looked at the young man, and thus spoke : ‘Abraham Midwood, I have brought my children here to show them that it is possible to be happy in a state of disease, poverty and want ; now tell them if it is not so.’ The sick and dying youth replied with a sweet smile :

“ ‘O, yes, sir ! I would not change my state with that of the richest person on earth, who has not an interest in Christ. Blessed be God ! I have a good hope, through Christ, of being admitted into those blessed regions where Lazarus now dwells, having long forgot all his sorrows and miseries. Sir, this is nothing to bear while the presence of God cheers my soul. Indeed, sir, I am truly happy, and I trust to be happy through eternity.’

“Mr. Venn turned to his children and said, ‘This is the interesting sight which I wished to

show you,—that a man, and a young man, too, can be truly happy without wealth, fame, or health. From this time, remember that happiness does not depend upon worldly prosperity, but upon a mind at peace with God. For here you learn that, in poverty and sickness, the truest happiness may be enjoyed.’”

“‘There, Jane,” said Mrs. Marlow, “I think there is no need of saying more to convince you that we may have a happy new year, even though we are sick.”

“We certainly should be happy if we felt as that young man did,” said Jane.

The evening was now far spent. Mr. Marlow commended the family to God in prayer; and soon all were silent in the sleep of night.

CHAPTER VII.

The sad news. — Can a person be happy without eyes? — Jane's Sunday School paper. — Story of Julia Brace, deaf, dumb and blind, yet happy.

THE conversation about a happy new year seemed to be ended; but one day an incident occurred to revive it. A letter came with sad tidings to the family. A little cousin of Jane, about the same age, living in a distant part of the state, had been badly burned by the bursting of a camphine lamp, and the letter brought the sad intelligence. Her eyes were entirely destroyed.

"Poor, poor Sarah!" exclaimed Jane, as her mother read the letter; "will she never see again?"

"It is shocking, indeed!" replied her mother. "Poor girl! Never more to see the light of the sun! The new year has commenced sadly to her!"

"O, how wretched she must be, mother!" — "can nothing be done for her, to make her see again?"

"Probably not," answered Mrs. Marlow. "It will be all darkness to her hereafter. How I pity her!"

Here Mr. Marlow came in from the store, and the sad news was told him. His sympathy was excited for little Sarah, she had been so unfortunate, and he gave expression to his surprise and tender feeling by many ejaculations.

"I think, father," said Jane, "it must be far from a happy new year to Cousin Sarah. How unhappy a blind person must be!"

"True, very true, my daughter," rejoined her father. "Sarah never experienced so great a trial, and I think it will be the saddest year of her life. But then we ought to be thankful that she was not killed outright."

Business called Mr. Marlow hastily away. Sarah's terrible misfortune was the subject of frequent conversation thereafter, and a note expressive of great sympathy was despatched to the afflicted family. Jane's thoughts were almost incessantly upon Sarah, and she was often heard to say, "Poor girl, how unhappy!"

The following Sabbath, came Jane's Sunday School paper. This was always quite a treat. As usual, she sat down to read it after meeting. She

had not read long before she exclaimed, in a loud voice :

“Cousin Sarah may be happy yet, mother. Here is a beautiful story about Julia Brace, who could not see, hear nor speak, and yet she was very cheerful and happy.”

“Indeed !” said Mrs. Marlow, “that is a more dreadful misfortune than Sarah’s. She can yet speak and hear, and these are very great blessings. We are seldom so much afflicted that we cannot find others still more so. But let me hear about Julia Brace. I dare say your father would like to hear you read it.”

“I should, indeed,” said Mr. Marlow, laying aside the book which he was reading.

So Jane began to read, and the story was as follows : —

“Julia Brace can neither see, hear nor speak ; yet she is a very good girl. Though she cannot see nor hear, yet she can tell more about things, by touching and smelling them, than you can by the same means. When clothes are given her, she feels of them, and smells them, and she likes those that are finest.

“Some kind-hearted people sent her to school. But what could she learn there ? She could neither see to read, nor hear anything the teacher

said; yet she did learn something there. She learned that the rest of the children spent most of their time in looking on their books; and so she would hold one before her eyes a great while at a time, though she could not see a single letter. She thought her kitten could learn to read, and she would spread a newspaper before it, and put her hand on its mouth, to find whether it was moving its lips, as the children did when reading; and when she found it did not, she would shake it, for she thought it did not try to learn."

Here Jenny, who sat in her little chair beside her mother, had a hearty laugh, and Jane kept on reading, though she looked then as if she would like to laugh too.

"Julia spent most of her time in knitting and sewing; and she made many beautiful things which were sold to buy clothes for her. Indeed, she would do things more difficult still. Gentlemen who visited her would give her their watches, and then try to get from her the ones that were not their own; but she never would give up one of them except to its owner. How could she tell the men, or the watches apart, when she could not see? That is strange, indeed.

"Julia is very neat, and keeps her things in excellent order. If any one misplaces anything

in her drawers, she soon finds it out, and puts the thing back in its place. When the clothes are brought in, after being washed, in great baskets, she will go and pick out her own, without mistake. If her clothes are beginning to wear out, she discovers it and mends them.

“She never takes anything which does not belong to her, and keeps the Sabbath very strictly, and seems to be thinking of serious things. Though no one else can teach her, yet God can teach her; for he can speak to the mind by the Holy Spirit.

“A great many more things I might tell you about this interesting girl, but I will not be tedious to you. One thing more I want to tell you. She is very good-natured, cheerful and contented. I think I never saw a happier girl than she is generally. There are many children and youth who not only can see and hear and speak, but who have everything they wish for amusement and pleasure, and yet they are very peevish and fretful. They are happy only at times. But Julia Brace is always so happy that it makes everybody else happy to see her.

“How strange,” said Jane, as soon as she had finished the story; “how strange that she can be so happy! I mean to read this story to Sarah

the first time I see her. If Julia Brace can be happy without seeing, hearing or speaking, then I should think Cousin Sarah might be happy without seeing, because she can hear and speak."

"Yes," added her mother, "any person, however much afflicted, can be happy if he loves God. You know what you learned the other day, that a peaceful mind makes a person happy, and the mind is made peaceful by truly believing that God orders all things for our good. Now, cannot a person feel that being made blind is for his good, as really as being made sick?"

"Yes, mother; only I should think it would be harder to feel so when one is blind than when he is sick."

"That is very true. It would require a holier heart to be contented and happy without eyes, than to be so without health. What I mean is, that if a person is good enough, he can be happy even though he cannot see nor hear."

"Are you not convinced now, Jane," inquired Mr. Marlow, "that it may be a happy new year to a person who is even deaf, dumb and blind?"

Jane smiled, as if she thought that now every event had something to do with a happy new year, and said that the story of Julia Brace made it appear so.

CHAPTER VIII.

Can it be a happy new year to one who dies ? — Dr. Payson. —
Dr. Watts. — The stranger boy and the minister's visit.

THE conversation about the deaf, dumb and blind girl was discontinued by a remark of Mr. Marlow which introduced another topic.

"Jane," said he, "there is another matter which I ought to speak about before we dismiss this subject of the happy new year."

"What can it be, father?" inquired Jane, as if she thought they had talked about almost everything which could belong to it.

"It is about dying," answered Mr. Marlow. "This is a very solemn subject, and one which people, and especially young people, are prone to forget. Do you think this year would be a happy one to you if you should die?"

"What! be happy to die, and leave you and mother?" exclaimed Jane.

"Do you not think that a person may be happy even in death?"

"I have not thought so ; but you have talked so much about it, that I begin to think a person may be happy almost anywhere."

"But you have certainly heard our minister speak at funerals, when he told how happy the persons were when they died."

"I know that," replied Jane ; "but I did n't see them die. I thought you meant to ask me about what I knew, from seeing persons die myself."

"Then you do believe that persons may be happy even in the hour of death ?"

Jane hesitated, but finally replied in the affirmative, adding, "I may be better convinced if I hear more about such persons."

"I will convince you, then," said her father, rising and going to the bookcase for a volume. "Here is a book called the Last Hours of the Dying, which contains many such examples."

"Does it tell about any persons whom you know, father ?"

"It tells about one man whom I have seen. He was a minister of the gospel, and I went to hear him preach once."

"Was it Uncle James' minister, who died last year ?"

"No, my dear ; but it is one of whom you have

often heard. It is Dr. Payson. Just before he died he uttered the following happy language."

Here Mr. Marlow read from the book, "The celestial city is now full in my view. Its glories beam upon me. Its sounds strike upon my ear, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, and this appears but an insignificant rill, which may be crossed by a single step, whenever God shall give permission."

"Is not that such language as a happy person would utter?" asked her father.

"I think it is; and if he felt so, death could not have been dreadful to him."

"Did not the apostle declare that for him to die was gain?"

"Yes, sir; and that was in my Sabbath School lesson a little while ago," said Jane, with much zeal.

"Then, if a person is prepared to meet death, it is not so terrible, is it?"

"It seems so from that," answered Jane.

"There is another example," continued Mr. Marlow, "which I remember. I never saw the man, but have heard much about him, and so have you. It is Dr. Watts."

"Did he not write our hymn-book, father?"

“Yes, it is the same man. You would judge, from his psalms and hymns, that he was a very good man, ready at all times to die; should you not?”

“I think I should; and I should like to hear something more about him. I am sure I should always remember it on the Sabbath, when I look into the hymn-book.”

“Well, when Dr. Watts was about to die, and his suffering was very great, he raised his eyes, and, addressing the friends at his bed-side, said, ‘I bless God I can lie down with comfort at night, not being solicitous whether I awake in this world or another.’”

“Do you think,” inquired Jane, “that he would not rather have lived?”

“I think,” answered her father, “that he would rather have experienced just what was the Lord’s will; so he was not anxious whether he lived or died.”

“Father, you have told me about men who were happy in death; did you ever hear of a child, no older than I am, who died happy?”

“Certainly; I have heard of a great many.”

“Will you please tell me about one?”

“I will tell you of a boy, not more than ten or eleven years of age, of whom the Sabbath School

agent spoke when he was here last year. Perhaps you have forgotten it."

"I do not remember that he said anything about a boy who was happy when he died."

"Perhaps you will remember more about it as I proceed with the story. A minister saw a little boy come into his meeting-house one Sabbath, and take a seat upon the pulpit stairs; and this, of course, attracted his notice."

Jenny laughed that the little boy should take a seat on the pulpit stairs, and Jane exclaimed,

"Did he not know any better, father?"

"There are some children," said Mr. Marlow, "who have no seats of their own, if they go to church. This was the case with this little boy. His father was either too wicked, or too poor, to hire a seat for him, and as he came a great way, and got there late, he thought he would sit on the pulpit stairs. The minister did not know him, and all the congregation looked at him as if he were a stranger."

"Was he poorly dressed?" asked Jane.

"His clothes were poor. but his face and hands were so clean, and his hair combed so smoothly, as to indicate that he came appearing as well as he could. The minister could hardly turn his eyes away from the lad, he was so interested to learn

who he was. When he rose to preach, the lad looked him right in the face, and scarcely turned his eyes away during all the time he was preaching. The minister could not help noticing it, for no child ever before listened to him with so much attention."

"Were there other children there?" said Jane. "It must have mortified them to have had that poor, ragged boy pay better attention than they did."

"Yes, there were many children present, and not one of them was so attentive as the poor stranger boy. He looked, all the time, as if he went to meeting to hear. And, when the meeting was through, there was great inquiry who the boy was."

"Did n't anybody know him?" asked Jane, with great surprise.

"No; the minister inquired of several persons, but no one knew him."

"Why did they not ask the boy himself?" inquired Jane, with an air of wonder.

"Because, as soon as meeting was through, the boy was out first, and away he went as fast as his feet would carry him. They had no opportunity to make inquiries."

“And did they never know who he was, father?”

“That you will ascertain by listening. The next Sabbath came. The minister could scarcely help thinking, as he was on the way to the church, I wonder if the stranger boy will be there. Meeting commenced, and the choir sung a hymn, but the poor lad was not there. The minister began to think he should see him no more. But, just as he rose to commence the sermon, in came the little lad, almost upon the run, and took his seat again upon the pulpit stairs. People in the congregation looked at one another and smiled. The minister went on with his sermon, and the boy was attentive as ever. He looked directly at the preacher, and never dozed at all.”

“Did they not ask him this time who he was?” said Jane.

“As soon as the benediction was pronounced, he was out and off as before, so that no one could make inquiries. The next Sabbath he was not there. Another Sabbath passed, and still he was not there. All began to think he would be at meeting no more. But the minister, so anxious to ascertain something more concerning the lad, had succeeded in learning a little of him, though nothing very definite.”

“And did he never go to meeting there again?” asked Jane, impatient to hear the end.

“That is what you will soon learn. One evening, just at candle-lighting, the minister heard a rap at his door. On opening it, he found a miserable-looking man, who addressed him thus :

“ ‘Are you the minister, sir ?’

“ ‘I am.’

“ ‘My little boy is very sick, and he says he must see you before he dies. I think he cannot live through the night.’

“As he spoke, the tears ran down his furrowed cheeks, and he seemed to feel very deeply. The minister could hardly refrain from weeping, he felt so much for the dying boy and his poor father.

“ ‘How does he seem ?’ inquired the minister ; ‘is he very unhappy because he is going to die ?’

“ ‘O no !’ replied the stranger, wiping the tears away from his eyes. ‘He was never so happy in his life. He sings and prays much of his time, and says “*to die is gain.*” ’

“Now the minister was more than ever interested to see the lad ; and although the stranger told him it was ‘a long four miles’ to his house, and some of the way nothing but a foot-path through the woods, so that they could not ride, yet he cheerfully consented to go.”

“What!” exclaimed Jane, “did he go on foot four miles in the night, to see a sick boy?”

“Yes, and I would go twice as far to see just such a boy to-night,” said her father.

“Tell me, father,” said Jane, very impatient to hear the whole, “tell me how the boy was when they got there.”

“I was going to say that they travelled on through a very dreary part of the town, and passed over the line into the adjoining town. They went up hill and down, through woods and open fields, until the minister began to think it was a very ‘long four miles.’ At length they reached the house, a poor, rickety habitation, having only two windows, and hardly good enough for a barn.”

Here Jane looked at her mother with an expression which showed that now was coming what most of all she wished to learn.

“They opened the door,” continued Mr. Marlow, “and the minister’s eye at once met the eye of the dying boy, as he lay in one corner of the room upon his poor bed of straw.”

“How glad I am,” exclaimed Jane, “that he was alive! I was afraid he would die before the minister got there.”

“The poor boy smiled, and showed how glad he

was to see a minister. And the minister himself was much surprised, on approaching him, to find that he was the same one who sat on the pulpit stairs."

"Can it be, can it be?" shouted Jane.

"Yes, it was the same lad; and he raised himself up in the bed, as the minister drew near him, and lifting his eyes toward heaven, and waving his hand, exclaimed, '*O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten me the victory.*' He could say no more. His strength failed him, and he fell back upon his pillow and died."

"What a pity," said Jane, "that he could not have lived to talk more with the minister!"

"But he said enough," rejoined her father, "to assure the minister that he died happy. And I think that you must admit now that even a child no older than yourself may have a happy new year, though he dies."

"I am convinced, father," said Jane.

"I should like to say much more about this lad," added Mr. Marlow; "but the evening is far spent, and I have something I wish to say in relation to what I have been teaching you. Besides, I wish to read to you about another child who died

in peace, and which Mr. Tennyson has put into poetry.”

So saying, he brought from the parlor a gilt-bound volume, and read the following article :

“If you ’re waking, call me early, call me early, mother
dear,

For I would see the sun rise upon the glad new year ;

It is the last new year that I shall ever see,

Then ye may lay me low i’ the mould, and think no more
o’ me.

“To-night I saw the sun set ; he set and left behind

The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of
mind ;

And the new year’s coming up, mother, but I shall never
see

The may upon the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

“Last May we made a crown of flowers ; we had a merry
day ;

Beneath the hawthorn on the green, they made me Queen
of May ;

And we danced about the maypole, and in the hazel-copse,

Till Charles’ wain came out above the tall, white chimney-
tops.

“There ’s not a flower on all the hills ; the frost is on the
pane ;

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again ;

I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high,

I long to see a flower so, before the day I die.



“The building rook ’ll caw from the windy, tall, elm tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow ’ll come back again with summer o’er the
 wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

“Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early, early morning the summer sun ’ll shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm asleep, mother, and all the world is
 still.

“When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning
 light,
Ye ’ll never see me more in the long, gray fields at night ;
When from the dry, dark world the summer airs blow cool,
On the oat-grass, and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in
 the pool.

“Ye ’ll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn
 shade,
And ye ’ll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly
 laid ;
I shall not forget ye, mother, I shall hear ye when ye pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant
 grass.

“I have been wild and wayward, but ye ’ll forgive me now ;
Ye ’ll kiss me, my own mother, upon my cheek and brow ;
Nay, nay, ye must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
Ye should not fret for me, mother, ye have another child.

“If I can, I ’ll come again, mother, from out my resting-
 place ;
Though ye ’ll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your
 face ;

Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what ye
say,

And be often, often with ye, when ye think I 'm far away.

“ Good-night ! good-night ! when I have said good-night for
evermore,

And ye see me carried out from the threshold of the door,
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing
green ;

She 'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

“ She 'll find my garden tools upon the granary floor ;
Let her take 'em — they are hers — I shall never garden
more ;

But tell her, when I 'm gone, to train the rose-bush that I
set,

About the parlor window, and the box of mignonette.

“ Good-night, sweet mother ! call me when it begins to dawn ;
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad new year,
So, if you 're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.”

With this they ceased talking about the stranger
lad, and conversed another half-hour as related in
the following chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

Review. — What learned. — Nothing but religion will make a person happy. — A year of misery without religion ; a year of happiness with it. — The French boy and the Bible

“CAN you tell me now, Jane,” inquired her father, “what important lessons you have learned from this conversation ?”

“I have learned that rich and honored men are not as happy as some who are poor.”

“Rather, you have learned that riches and honor cannot *confer* happiness. A rich man may be happy, and so an honored man may be; but not *because* they are rich and honored.”

“I was thinking the other day,” said Jane, “what you would say about Deacon Goodyear, who does so much good with his money. He gives a great deal to poor people, and they all love him very much. And did not our minister say here, last summer, that Deacon Goodyear enjoyed it very much ?”

“No doubt,” answered her father, “that Deacon Goodyear enjoys his wealth in using it to bless

will make him truly happy, whether rich or poor, high or low, sick or well, living or dying ? ”

“ It certainly seems so,” replied Jane. “ And if I wish him a happy year, and mean by it that he may have money, honor and other things, these may make him unhappy.”

“ That is the correct idea. I will state it a little more clearly. Though a man possess all earthly things, without religion he may have a year of misery ; but though he possess little or nothing of these, with religion he will certainly have a year of happiness.”

“ Should you think that people would be at a loss to know which to choose, Jane ? ” inquired her mother, who had remained silent during much of this conversation.

“ No, mother ; for my part I would rather have that which would most certainly make me happy.”

“ You will know, from this time,” added Mr. Marlow, “ what I mean when I wish you ‘ a happy new year,’ will you not ? ”

“ It would be strange if I did not, after you have said so much. I think I shall never forget this conversation whenever I hear anybody express the same wish again.”

“ There is one book, which is a sure guide for

the young in the path of happiness ; can you tell me what it is ? ”

“ The Bible,” replied Jane, confident that she was right.

“ True,” said her father, delighted with her ready reply. “ And I can tell you a fine story to illustrate this, in connection with what has been said.”

“ And I will be glad to hear it.”

Mr. Marlow proceeded as follows : “ Not many years ago, there lived a boy in France, whose parents were about to choose for him some occupation for life ; and, like all parents, they desired to select one which would make him happy. Accordingly they determined upon a certain trade, but it did not please the son.”

“ What trade was it ? ” inquired Jane.

“ That is not important to know. The lad desired to be a chemist, and no persuasion of his father could change his mind.”

“ Why did he wish to be a chemist ? ”

“ Because he had seen a man in the neighborhood, whose occupation was that of a chemist and druggist, and he was one of those lovely, amiable men who always wear a smile ; and the lad supposed that such habitual happiness must have something to do with his daily pursuit.”

Jane smiled, as her mother added, "It shows how careful we ought to be about our behavior before the young. For it seems that even a *smile* may lead a boy to choose an occupation for life."

"Did he become a chemist?" asked Jane, eager to hear the story through.

"I was about to say that after much hesitation the lad was sent to live with the chemist. It was a happy day to him,—the day on which he left home to begin a business for life; for, like most youth, he was fond of new things, and did not fully realize the worth of a home. But he soon found that happiness did not depend upon being a chemist, and that the chemist himself was not as happy as he appeared to be. So, after trying this occupation to his satisfaction, he made known to his parents his disappointment, and expressed a wish to engage in some other."

"And did they let him leave that for another? Perhaps he would not be happy anywhere."

"At length another business was chosen, and the lad left the chemist for the trade which his parents decided he should follow."

"Was he happy then?" inquired Jane.

"Far from it; but he had learned, by this time, that happiness does not depend so much upon one's occupation as upon the mind, and he was willing

to gratify his father and mother, although he did not really give up the idea that he might find an employment in which he should be happier."

"I think, father," said Jane, "that, if *you* had been with him a little while, you would have made him understand better what happiness is."

"But you will soon see that he finally learned what it is; for one day he met a poor colporteur, and ——"

"What is a colporteur, father?"

"One who carries about Bibles, religious books and tracts, to sell and give away. As I was saying, the lad met the colporteur, a pious, cheerful, smiling man, with a pack upon his back.

"Can you sell me the secret of being happy?" he inquired.

"Surely I can," responded the colporteur, instantly; "and cheap, too."

"So he let his pack down upon the ground, and, taking out a well-bound book, offered it to him, saying,

"This will teach you how to be happy."

Jane, looking earnestly at her father, asked, with a smile, "Was it not the Bible?"

"Yes, it was the Bible," replied Mr. Marlow. "The boy was in jest when he put the question to the colporteur; but the adroitness of the man in

replying to it, pleased him, so he took the book, and paid him for it."

"What became of the boy? What did he do with the Bible?"

"He studied the Bible, and, by the blessing of God, it did teach him how to be happy. He became a Christian, and a minister, and is now the pastor of a Protestant church in Switzerland."

Thus ended the conversation of the Marlow family about THE HAPPY NEW YEAR.

THE NEW YEAR.

BY SOMEBODY.

"This year is just going away,
The moments are finishing fast ;
My heart, have you nothing to say
Concerning the time that is past ?

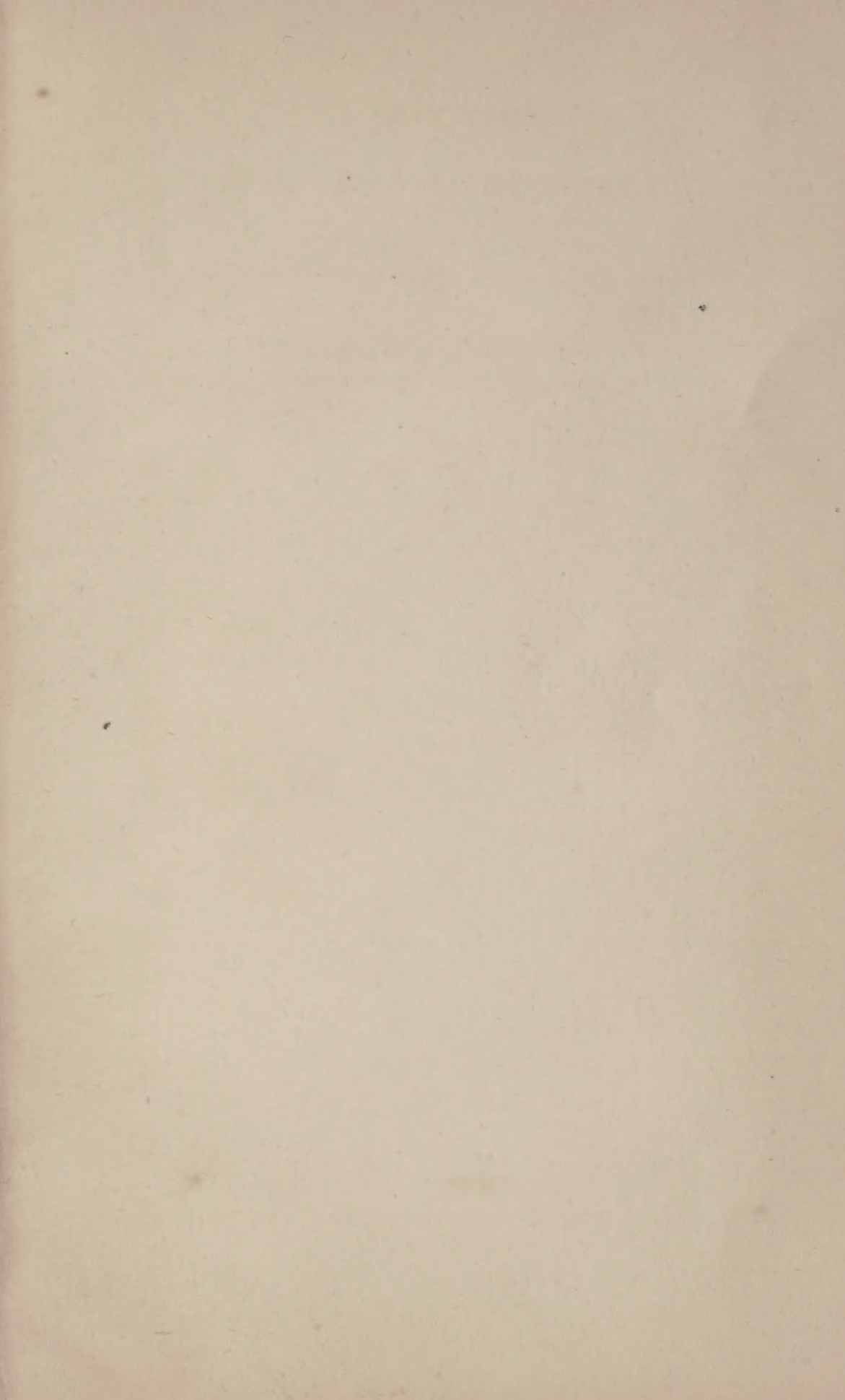
"Now, while in my chamber alone,
Where God will be present to hear,
I 'll try to remember and own
The faults I 've committed this year.

"O Lord, I 'm ashamed to confess
How often I 've broken thy day ;
Perhaps I have thought of my dress,
Or wasted the moments in play.

“ And when the good minister tried
 To make little children attend,
I was thinking of something beside,
 Or wishing the sermon would end.

“ How often I rose from my bed,
 And did not remember my prayer !
Or, if a few words I have said,
 My thoughts have been going elsewhere.”

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